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# **Background Report: Demographics Element of the New Town Plan**

September 8, 2004  
Planning, Zoning and Development Department



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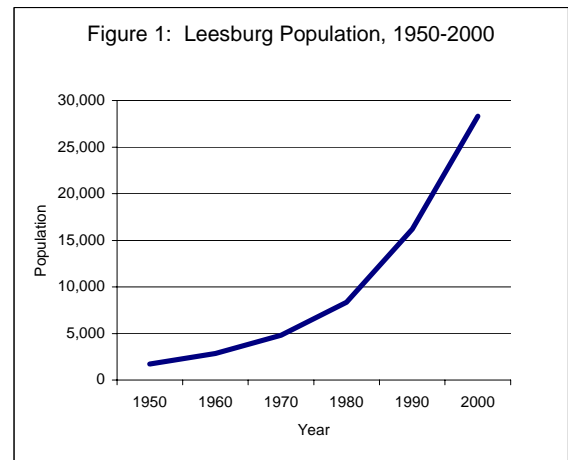
## Background Report: Demographics Element of the New Town Plan

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The Town of Leesburg has experienced and will continue to accommodate changes in its population, both in size and in character. The most rapid increase in population occurred from 1980 to 2000, when 19,954 people moved to Leesburg to join the existing 8,357 residents. The average Leesburg household earns \$68,861 dollars and is comprised of 2.69 people who speak only English. The median age of Leesburg's residents is 33.1 years and per capita income is \$30,116 dollars. The projected increases in Leesburg's population to 56,556 people by 2030 will most likely change these characteristics.

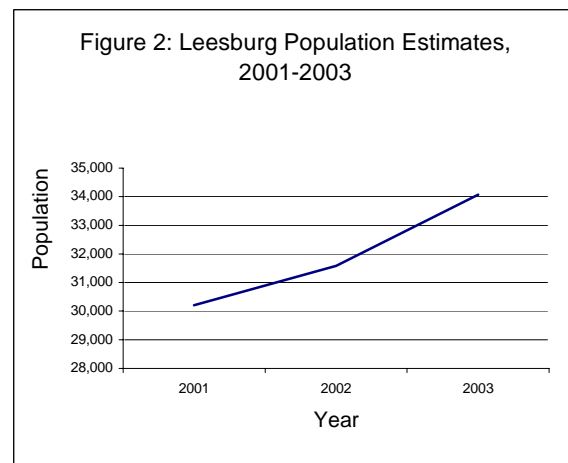
### Population Trends

Like the metropolitan Washington region as a whole, much of Leesburg's population growth is attributable to the expanding federal government, the businesses that serve the federal government, and the rise in high technology. Since the end of World War II, the pattern of growth has been the suburban expansion of population and jobs. For Leesburg in particular, the increase in population was negligible until around 1960 when Dulles International Airport was constructed and when neighboring Fairfax County began to develop. The most significant decade for population growth since that time was between 1980 and 1990 when the population jumped from 8,357 to 16,202 people, an increase of almost 94 percent. It is important to note that a major annexation took place in 1984, adding 1,485 people to the town limits. As of the 2000 U.S. Census, 28,311 people called Leesburg home, an increase of almost 75 percent from the 1990 census.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Leesburg, as the county seat, has historically been the center of government, business, and population for Loudoun. The suburbanization of eastern Loudoun since the 1960s has been changing that relationship. In terms of population, the huge population growth in both the Town and the County in the 1990s also resulted in a significant change in the Town's relative position. The 2000 census recorded that the Town's share of the County's population was only 16.7 percent, down from its 18.8 share in 1990.

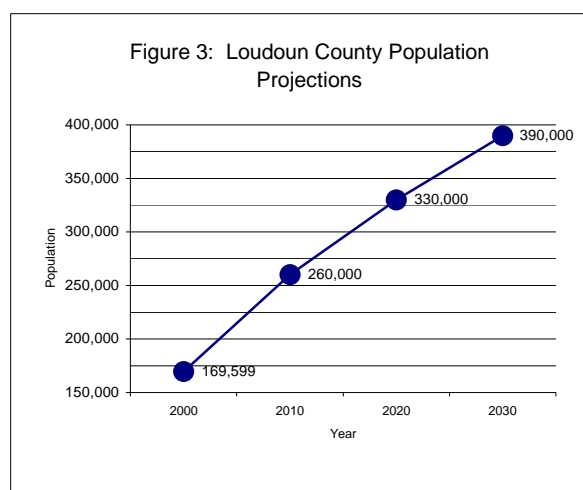


Source: U.S. Census Bureau

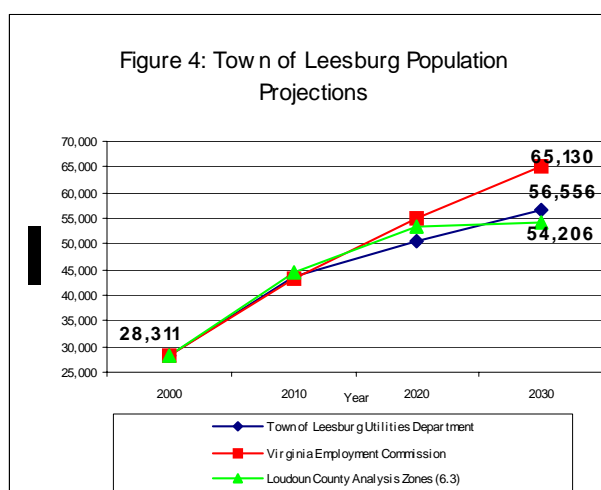
Loudoun County has grown quickly as well, topping

the U.S. Census Bureau's list of fastest-growing counties in the country from 2000 to 2003 with a population increase of 30.7 percent, representing 52,147 new residents. If Loudoun County continues growing at this rate, the population will reach almost 379,000 people by 2010, exceeding the projections generated by the Virginia Employment Commission by 119,000 people for the same time period.

Leesburg and Loudoun County are expected to accommodate several thousand more residents in the coming years. The projected rates of increase are lower for Leesburg than for Loudoun County. Overall, the projected population increase from 2000 to 2030 for Loudoun County is 129 percent (Virginia Employment Commission) or 220,401 people. The Town of Leesburg Utilities Department projects Leesburg's population to increase by almost 100 percent by 2030 to 56,556 people. Another projection for the Town, from Loudoun County projections, reach totals of 54,206 by 2030 (Loudoun County Analysis Zones, Round 6.3) for an increase of almost 92 percent. For any of the three projections to be accommodated in the Town would require significant changes to zoning regulations and land use patterns.



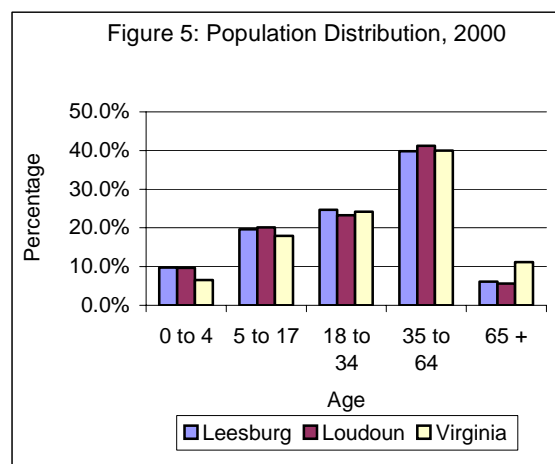
Source: Loudoun County



Sources: Town of Leesburg, Virginia Employment Commission, Loudoun County

## Age

The median age of Leesburg residents was 33.1 years according to the 2000 U.S. Census. The percentage of school-aged children in Leesburg was 19.6 percent, and there are more young children aged birth to four years old (9.8 percent) than there are people over 65 years old (6.1 percent.) Proportionally, Leesburg also has a slightly younger population than Loudoun County with 0.4% less residents over 65 years of age.

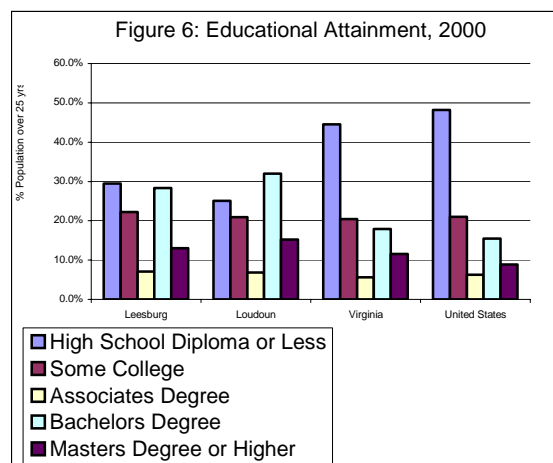


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000

## Educational Attainment

The 2000 census reported that Leesburg's residents have higher educational attainment than was found in the state or the country as a whole; however, Loudoun County residents showed slightly higher attainment than for those in the Town.

Approximately 41 percent of Leesburg residents aged 25 and older had earned a Bachelors Degree or a higher degree whereas about 47 percent of Loudoun residents had achieved the same level of education. Across Leesburg, Loudoun County, Virginia and the United States, the percentage of students completing some college or achieving an associates degree is approximately the same. When considering high school degree attainment or less as a characteristic showing a lack of higher education, the nationwide percentage (48 percent) is almost double that of Loudoun County (25 percent) and also much higher than that of Leesburg (30 percent).

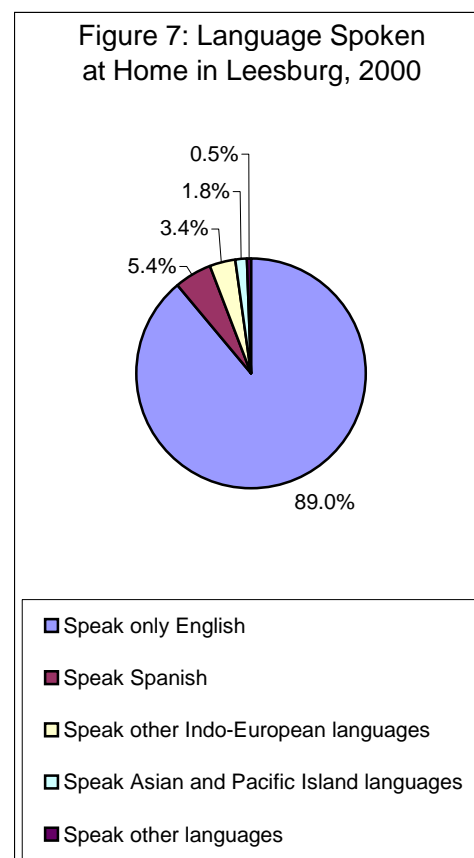


## Racial and Ethnic Diversity

The racial composition of the Town included 83.3 percent Whites, 9.2 percent African Americans, 4.7 percent Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islanders and other races, and 2.6 percent Asians in the 2000 census. With that mix, Leesburg was slightly less diverse than the County. Notably, the Asian population in Leesburg was half that of Loudoun County (5.3 percent). However, the African American population was a larger portion of the Town's population (9.2 percent, compared to 6.9 percent in the County).

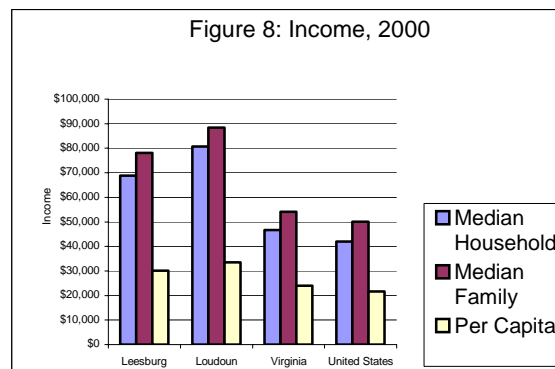
Residents of Hispanic ethnicity were 5.9 percent of Leesburg's population. Hispanics were also the fastest growing racial or ethnic minority in Leesburg in the 1990s, with a growth rate exceeding 300 percent.

An overwhelming majority of Leesburg residents spoke only English (89.0 percent.) Spanish was the next most common language (5.4 percent) followed by other Indo-European languages (3.4 percent), Asian and Pacific Island languages (1.8 percent), and other languages (0.5 percent.) The Town is on par with Loudoun County and Virginia with regard to the proportion of residents speaking these languages.



## Income

As of the 2000 census, Leesburg comprised 10,325 households. The median income of these *households* (related or unrelated people who live in a housing unit) was \$68,861 dollars. Similarly, there were 7,258 *families* (households of related people only) in Leesburg with a median family income of \$78,111 dollars. The per capita income in Leesburg was \$30,116 dollars. These figures trailed slightly behind those of Loudoun County, although they were much higher than the national average. As compared to United States incomes, Leesburg's median household income was 61 percent higher, the median family income was 64 percent higher, and the per capita income was 72 percent higher. Of all households in Leesburg, 21 percent or 2,164 households have housing cost problems, which means that these households spend 30 percent or more of their income on housing costs (rent or mortgage, utilities, fuel, etc.).

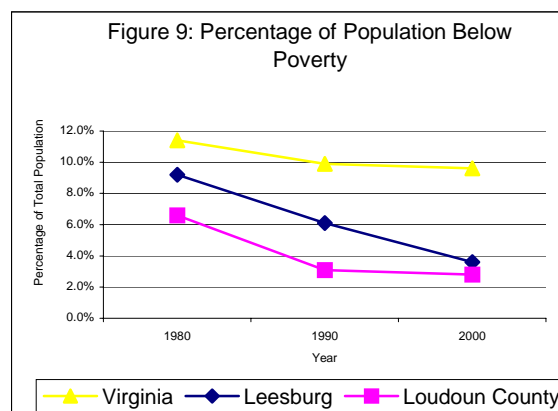


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000

## Poverty Level

A person's poverty status is determined by one's total family income compared to the poverty threshold appropriate for the size and characteristics (age, relationship, etc.) of the family. If the family income is less than the poverty threshold for that particular family, then all members of the family are classified as poor. The percentage of Leesburg's population living below the poverty level has decreased steadily since 1980 from 9.2 percent to 3.6 percent in 2000. Of those in poverty in 2000, 31.8 percent were children under the age of 18 and 11.2 percent were people aged 65 and older. The percentage of families living below poverty in Leesburg was 2.4 percent. Of these families, 67.1 percent were headed by females.

In 2000, Loudoun County had a smaller percentage of the population living below the poverty level (2.8 percent); however, Virginia had a significantly greater percentage (9.6 percent.) The percentages of people living below the poverty level aged less than 18 years and 65 years and over were comparable to Leesburg's.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1980, 1990, 2000